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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/668,166

09/24/2003

Toshio Kimura

1035-473

4031

23117

7590

01/28/2008

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EXAMINER

ARENA, ANDREW OWENS

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2811

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

01/28/2008

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/668,166	Applicant(s) KIMURA ET AL.	
	Examiner Andrew O. Arena	Art Unit 2811	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 November 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4,5,7-9,11-13,15-17,19 and 20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4,5,7-9,11-13,15-17,19 and 20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |                                                                                                            |                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                                           | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                                |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sumikawa (US 6,362,529) in view of Anderson (US 6,661,100).

**RE claim 1**, Sumikawa discloses (Figs 3, 6, 7; col 5 ln 20-41) a semiconductor device comprising (referring to Fig 3):

a plurality of spaced apart through electrodes (2; col 3 ln 32) with equal cross sectional areas in a semiconductor chip (1; col 3 ln 30) which through electrodes electrically link a front surface of the chip to a back surface of the chip (col 3 ln 38-40), wherein

a least one of the plurality of through electrodes is in communication with a power supply (inherent; this must be true in order to operate the chip),

at least another one of the plurality of through electrodes is in communication with ground (inherent; this must be true in order to operate the chip),

at particular signal-routing through electrode is formed of only one of the plurality of through electrodes (e.g., 22a in Fig 4; col 4 ln 53); and

at least one of the plurality of through electrodes is a non-contact through electrode (22b) which is electrically isolated from the chip (col 4 ln 3-6; col 4 ln 45-55) so that said at least one through electrode is not electrically connected to any electrode pad of the chip (22b is not connected to any of 23a, 23b, 24a or 24b).

Sumikawa differs from the claimed invention only in not disclosing a plurality of through electrodes connected to one another to form a high-current through electrode.

Anderson discloses an analogous stacked-chip semiconductor device (col 3 ln 5; Fig 3) comprising (Fig 2) a plurality of spaced apart electrodes (205) on a semiconductor chip (200) wherein at least two electrodes are connected to one another to form a first high-current electrode (210) for power supply (VDD; col 4 ln 8-12), at least another electrodes are connected to one another to form a second high-current electrode (220) for ground supply (GND; col 4 ln 3-7), and a particular signal-routing electrode (205) is formed of only one electrode.

It is fundamental in electrical arts that resistance is proportional to area; one of ordinary skill instantly appreciates that connecting a plurality of electrodes increases the effective cross-sectional area of the conductor and carries a given signal with less loss.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that, in view of Anderson, at least two of the plurality of through electrodes are connected to one another to form a first high-current through electrode that is in communication with a power supply and at least another two of the plurality of through electrodes are connected to one another to form a second high-current through electrode that is in communication with ground; at least to reduce power losses.

**RE claim 2**, Sumikawa discloses at least one type of the through electrodes is contact through electrodes electrically connected to that semiconductor chip (col 4 ln 53-55).

**RE claim 4**, the combined device discloses both of the first number and the second number is two or greater (Anderson: Fig 2), so that each of the first (210) and second (220) high-current through electrodes is made up of at least two adjacent ones of the through electrodes which are electrically connected to one another, whereas the signal-routing electrode (205) is made up of only one of the through electrodes.

**RE claim 5**, Sumikawa discloses multiple stacked semiconductor chips, each of the semiconductor chips including a semiconductor device according to claim 1.

**RE claim 7**, Sumikawa discloses (Figs 3, 4, 6, 7; col 5 ln 20-41) a chip-stack semiconductor device comprising:

a plurality (Fig 4) of stacked semiconductor chips (1, 21; col 4 ln 21-22), each of the semiconductor chips including a plurality of through electrodes (2, 22; col 4 ln 36) with equal cross-sectional areas therein linking a front surface to a back surface thereof,

wherein at least one first high-current electrode is connected to a power supply and at least one second high-current electrode is connected to ground (inherent; this must be true in order to operate the chip), and a signal-routing electrode connecting a front [surface to] a back surface of one of the semiconductor chips is made up of only one of the through electrodes (e.g., 22a in Fig 4; col 4 ln 53), and

at least one of the plurality of through electrodes is a non-contact through electrode which is electrically isolated from the chip (col 4 ln 3-6; col 4 ln 45-55) so that said at least one through electrode is not electrically connected to any electrode pad of the chip (22b is not connected to any of 23a, 23b, 24a or 24b).

Sumikawa differs from the claimed invention only in not disclosing a plurality of through electrodes connected to one another to form a high-current through electrode.

Anderson discloses an analogous stacked-chip semiconductor device (col 3 ln 5; Fig 3) comprising (Fig 2) a plurality of spaced apart electrodes (205) on a semiconductor chip (200) wherein at least two electrodes are connected to one another to form a first high-current electrode (210) for power supply (VDD; col 4 ln 8-12), at least another electrodes are connected to one another to form a second high-current electrode (220) for ground supply (GND; col 4 ln 3-7), and a particular signal-routing electrode (205) is formed of only one electrode.

It is fundamental in electrical arts that resistance is proportional to area; one of ordinary skill instantly appreciates that connecting a plurality of electrodes increases the effective cross-sectional area of the conductor and carries a given signal with less loss.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that, in view of Anderson, at least one of a first high-current through electrode connected to a power supply and a second high-current through electrode connected to ground is made up of at least two of the through electrodes which are electrically connected to one another; at least to reduce power losses.

**RE claim 8**, Sumikawa discloses (Figs 3, 4, 6, 7; col 5 ln 20-41) a chip-stack semiconductor device comprising:

multiple stacked (Fig 4) semiconductor chips (1, 21; col 4 ln 21-22), each of the semiconductor chips including a number of through electrodes (2, 22; col 4 ln 36) with

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equal cross-sectional areas therein linking a front surface to a back surface thereof, the number of the through electrodes being determined (no implied structure: MPEP 2114) in accordance with a magnitude of an electric current to be conducted therethrough, wherein

a number of through electrodes are connected to [a] either a ground terminal or a power supply terminal of that semiconductor chip (inherent; this must be true in order to operate the chip) and a number of through electrodes are connected to a particular signal terminal (e.g., 22a in Fig 4; col 4 ln 53), and

at least one of the through electrodes is a non-contact through electrode which is not electrically connected to any electrode pad of the chip in which it is formed (22b is not connected to any of 23a, 23b, 24a or 24b; col 4 ln 3-6; col 4 ln 45-55).

Sumikawa differs from the claimed invention only in not disclosing a plurality of through electrodes connected to one another to form a high-current through electrode.

Anderson discloses an analogous stacked-chip semiconductor device (col 3 ln 5; Fig 3) comprising (Fig 2) a plurality of spaced apart electrodes (205) on a semiconductor chip (200) wherein at least two electrodes are connected to one another to form a first high-current electrode (210) for power supply (VDD; col 4 ln 8-12), at least another electrodes are connected to one another to form a second high-current electrode (220) for ground supply (GND; col 4 ln 3-7), and a particular signal-routing electrode (205) is formed of only one electrode.

It is fundamental in electrical arts that resistance is proportional to area; one of ordinary skill instantly appreciates that connecting a plurality of electrodes increases the effective cross-sectional area of the conductor and carries a given signal with less loss.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that, in view of Anderson, at least one of a first high-current through electrode connected to a power supply and a second high-current through electrode connected to ground is made up of at least two of the through electrodes which are electrically connected to one another; at least to reduce power losses.

**RE claims 9, 11, & 12**, the combined device discloses a larger number of adjacent semiconductor chips results in a longer conduction path length (inherent; e.g., Sumikawa Fig 4).

Sumikawa as modified above differs from the claimed invention only in not expressly disclosing the number of through electrodes used in connecting different numbers of chips.

It is well known that a larger total conductor cross-section is used for a longer conduction path length to reduce impedance.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that a number of those through electrodes which connect  $n+1$  or more adjacent semiconductor chips is greater than a number of those through electrodes which connect  $n$  adjacent semiconductor chips, where  $n$  is an integer more than or equal to 2; at least to reduce impedance.



**RE claims 13, 15, & 16**, the combined device discloses a larger number of adjacent semiconductor chips results in a longer conduction path length (inherent; e.g., Sumikawa Fig 4).

Sumikawa as modified above differs from the claimed invention only in not expressly disclosing the number of through electrodes is increased with interconnect line length.

It is well known that a larger total conductor cross-section is used for a longer conduction path length to reduce impedance.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that as an interconnect line length through the multiple stacked semiconductor chips is longer, more through electrodes are provided for the first high-current through electrode and the second high-current through electrode; at least to reduce impedance.

Furthermore, the recitation "as [a length]...is longer, more through electrodes" is not a structural limitation but seems to be either a recitation of indented use and does not impart patentability to apparatus claims such as these. See MPEP § 2114.

**RE claims 17, 19, & 20**, the combined device discloses a larger number of adjacent semiconductor chips results in a longer conduction path length (inherent).

Sumikawa as modified above differs from the claimed invention only in not expressly disclosing numbers of through electrodes are increased in proportion to an interconnect line length.

It is well known that a larger total conductor cross-section is used for a proportionally longer conduction path length to reduce impedance.

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that numbers of the first and second high-current through electrodes are increased in proportion to an interconnect line length through the multiple stacked semiconductor chips; at least to reduce impedance.

Furthermore, the recitation "are increased in..." is not a structural limitation but seems to be either a recitation of indented use or manner of operating; such recitations do not impart patentability to apparatus claims such as these. See MPEP § 2114.

### ***Response to Arguments***

The arguments filed 11/01/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The argument that "Sumikawa makes very clear that both penetrating electrodes are electrically connected to wiring patterns of the chip" (reply pg 9 ln 5) stand in stark contrast to Figure 4 of Sumikawa, which shows both electrodes (2a, 22) in contact with pads (4a, 3a, 23a) and electrodes (2b, 22b) not in contact with any pads.

The allegation of impermissible hindsight (reply pg 9, last paragraph) is not convincing. A person of ordinary skill in any electrical art, of necessity, understands that  $\text{resistance} = \text{constant} * \text{length} / \text{X-sec area}$ . See MPEP § 2141.03 citing to Hiyamizu.

The argument that one "would apply...Anderson" (reply pg 10 ln 3-5) attempts to limit the rationale, but one may use their knowledge. See MPEP § 2144(I).

**Conclusion**

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew O. Arena whose telephone number is 571-272-5976. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lynne A. Gurley can be reached on 571- 272-1670. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. For more info about PAIR, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. For questions PAIR access, contact the Electronic Business Center at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). For assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Rep or access to the automated info system, call 800-786-9199 or 571-272-1000.



Andrew O. Arena  
21 January 2008



LYNNE GURLEY  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

AU 2811, TC 2800